**SYLLABUS**

**CTPR 438 – PRACTICUM IN PRODUCING**

SYLLABUS

2 UNITS

USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

SPRING 2016

**Pre-requisite:** CTPR 310, Intermediate Production *or* CTPR 425, Production Planning.

MEETING TIMES: Tuesdays 4 – 6:50pm.

CLASSROOM: SCA

INSTRUCTOR: Nina R. Sadowsky

[nrsadowsky@gmail.com](mailto:nrsadowsky@gmail.com)

310-850-2360

STUDENT ASSISTANT: Marcel Giwargis

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310-745-7544

**NOTE: THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE AUDITED.** Guests must be pre-approved by Nina Sadowsky before attending the class.

**Class Overview:**

This course will provide a comprehensive overview of the world of producing. It is designed to look at producing a CTPR 480 project and projects produced outside of USC.

We will look at how projects are conceived, developed, packaged, financed and marketed.

What gets a project made and how do you know what kind of project you have?

We will also cover the nuts and bolts of short & long form projects. By the end of the semester each student should have the practical skills to schedule and budget a screenplay and manage a production as well as pitch a project.

This course will consist of lecture, discussion, audiovisual presentations, and prominent guest speakers from within the Industry.

REQUIRED TEXT: “So You Want to Be A Producer” by Lawrence Turman

CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is approximate. It may be adjusted, as required.

Week 1 January 12th

Overview of class, assignments and grading & expectations

What does it take to be a producer?

Primary goals and responsibilities of a producer, from finding the project to getting it seen to getting it made.

What do we mean by development, production, and post production?

Who develops?

How does you choose material?

Where do ideas come from?

What is intellectual property?

Hollywood structure

What is a “take”?

What makes a good story?

Who is your audience?

Price points for different genres

Film vs. Television vs. new media structure

Genre, franchises and branding

Assignment of genre project: *Group assignment. Research the history of film. Pick one film in a particular genre from each decade (1920 – present) and discuss why it was important to the development of cinema.*

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2 January 19th

In class presentations of genre assignment

Assigned reading; Turman, Chapters 3 and 4

Week 3 January 26th

Completion of genre presentations

Coverage and notes. What they are, how to do them. The art of note giving. How to work with a writer. Paths to development/coverage/log lines and taglines

Discussion about the basics of putting together a great pitch including a great logline, length, telling the story, characters, visual language and presentation. The “art of the meeting.”

Financing paths and strategies

How do movies get made?

Who buys material and how is it sold. Paths to financing (including soft money and tax incentives, pre-sales, equity, distribution advances and minimum guarantees, crowd funding)

The globalization of the film business and its impact on financing strategies

Assignment: Prepare a pitch (film, television or new media) no longer than 20 minutes. Think about your story, your audience, and why this project should be made.

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapters 5 and 6

Week 4 February 2nd

In class presentation of pitches (First Group)

Class feedback

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapters 7 and 8

Week 5 February 9th

In class presentation of pitches (Second Group)

Class feedback

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapter 9

Week 6 February 16th

In class presentation of pitches revised to reflect notes received in class, along with proposed key elements (actors, directors, other saleable elements) and sales strategy (independent or studio film, foreign vs. domestic value, reservation of rights). (First Group)

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapter 10

Week 7 March 1st

In class presentation of pitches revised to reflect notes received in class, along with proposed key elements (actors, directors, other saleable elements) and sales strategy (independent or studio film, foreign vs. domestic value, reservation of rights, etc.). (Second Group)

Week 8 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

Week 9 March 22nd

The art of the deal. Overview of contracts. The Legal components and industry terms of art: Deal Memos, Option Purchase Agreements, chain of title, certificates of authorship, Union rules and regulations/Collective Bargaining, “quotes”, Sales Company agreements, Distribution agreements, insurance (production, cast and E & 0), completion bonds.

In class mock negotiations

Week 10 March 29th

Overview of Pre-visualization

Location scouting

Practicals versus builds

Scenes, shots and set-ups, overheads and storyboards

The role of the producer in pre-viz

In class breakdown of a scene

Assignment: class will be assigned groups that will present a final “slate” based on pitches already presented; slate to be presented in week 15

Week 11 March 26th

Budgets (above and below the line categories, fringes, departmental categories and requirements), Impact on budget of scheduling and vice versa

Week 12 April 2nd

In class workshops, Scheduling, Breakdowns, Production Boards & Shooting Schedules, Call Sheets, Production Reports/Day out of Days, Lining the script, Assigning cast numbers

Running the set, cost reports

Week 13 April 9th

Post production including editing schedules, cash flow, music, deliverables, film editing, sound editing, loop groups and sweetening, f/x editing, foley, sound mix, digital vs. film finish

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapters 11 and 12

Week 14 April 16th

Marketing and distribution, festivals, film “dating,” publicity and promotion, social media

Assigned reading: Turman, Chapters 13 and 14

Week 15 April 24th

Presentation of final projects, Semester review

Week 16 April 30th

Final exam

**GRADING:**

Class Participation 20%

In class workshops 5%

History of genre presentation 15%

Pitches and slates 30%

Final Exam 30%

Students are expected be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full point (ex: A (B). A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered another full point (ex: B(C). Your grade will be lowered by a point for every subsequent absence. Two late arrivals equals one full absence.

In order for an absence to be excused the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\_index.html

(213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu)

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: <http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at [blackboard.usc.edu](http://blackboard.usc.edu/).

**Disruptive Student Behavior**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.